PRESERVE Or PERISH

An Eco-critical Reading of Select Green poems in Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam Literature

SYNOPSIS

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Title: *PRESERVE OR PERISH*
An Eco-critical Reading of Select Green poems in Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam Literature

1: Introduction:

I didn't heed, I don't heed and I won't heed….
The painful cry of the fish in the oil filled ocean
The angry outbursts of nature when trees are cut
The trembling of the ground when mines are dug
The sudden silence of the chirp of the sparrow killed midflight
The towering, irate waves resounding sworn vengeance
The cloudy black sky, hurt, due to the loss of her beauty
I didn't heed, I don't heed and I won't heed….
But today,
You, Oh! Corona, dumb than the dumbest of creatures
Have brought me to my knees….
'Me', The cleverest of all the clever creatures
I don't know where to run, to hide, to save myself and my loved ones
I don't know how to stop your roller coaster ride
Oh ! Corona, please stop
You, oh tiny one! Have humbled the giant!
I promise to heed, to love, to care, to have compassion
I promise to leave the Earth 'safe', for my children
For, it's our only HOME that we know of.

Today, when this tiny bug has heeled the world and brought it to a standstill, it becomes imperative for all of us to retrospect. In this forced period of cooling our heels and slowing down, let's all recollect our past deeds, act by act, scene by scene, that has helped in inching forward towards doomsday. Something which began with foraging for food, went on with ruthlessly violating mother nature for our greed. These deeds or rather misdeeds have brought us

to the brink of disaster. Our anthropocentric attitude of dominating nature has thus led to a new theory of reading nature writing in the last decade of the nineteenth century, known as Eco-criticism.

The world literature today is charged with two predominant thematic concerns – one is the environmental issues and second is the psychological disorders. These two thematic concerns have strong undercurrents of the contemporary realities of the modern world. The newspapers headlines cry themselves hoarse with issues related to environmental problems created as a consequential result of man's journey from the wild to ultra-modern civilization. The age-old debate on nature-cultural clash has reached to such an extreme point that the scholars have started measuring one another as prime enemies. The harmonious co-existence of man and nature is simply a history of bygone age. The period is marked with the issues like – rapidly melting of ice caps of Antarctica; endangered bio-diversity; acute level of pollution; urban sprawl and waste disposal; overpopulation and huge consumption; scarcity of drinking water; mechanized deforestation; usage of radioactive materials and its safe disposal; green-house gasses and depletion of the Ozone Layer; etc. All these issues have not only remained on the agenda of United Nation's Organization (UNO) or the individual nations reacting to these issues, but it has already become a part and parcel of common life on earth. Today, the world is a helpless witness to the various moods of nature, as somewhere it rains so heavy that it washes out the mega cities; however on the other hand, it creates a grave situation of drought that even mobilizes a huge migration.

United Nations Organization, by understanding the urgency and magnitude of the environmental issues, has formed a separate agency called United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It hosts the summits of the nations of the organization and convinces them to take necessary actions to decrease the carbon emission. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, in his forward to UN Climate Change Annual Report 2017 reveals the grave situations, as he writes – "Climate change is the defining challenge of our time, yet it is still accelerating faster than our efforts to address it. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide are higher than they have been for 800,000 years, and they are increasing. So, too, are the catastrophic effects of our warming planet – extreme storms, droughts, fires, floods, melting ice and rising sea levels."

1.2: Objectives of the Research:

The Objectives of the study are as follows:

- To recognize and understand basic facts and concepts involved in the study of environmental literature and culture and evaluate the ethical challenges involved in the practice of eco-criticism in a multicultural and global society.

- To explore the similarities and differences in the aesthetic perception of Nature as portrayed by the poets of the Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam literature.
- To prove that their perceptions and experiences either good or bad, help in bringing about a sense of eco-consciousness in the minds of the readers and to help develop their conservationist attitude towards nature and thus interpret the greatness of these poets as the well wishers of society.

1.3: Statement of the Hypothesis:

- It is assumed that the chosen poems reflect the respective poets' familiarity with Nature, hence there will be a difference in their basic stance. An eco-critical framework from a primarily deep ecologist and eco-feminist perspective will be used with particular emphasis on two aspects of the natural world, apocalypse and the earth.
- It is assumed that implicit messages can be more powerful than explicit ones, and that literature can influence readers' mindsets, which is why it is important to take a moment to consider what embedded attitudes the poems we read, communicate.

1.4: Data Collection

The data collected would be in the form of Primary and Secondary sources.

- Primary Sources: The original texts of the selected work as:
  1. Nanalal, Kavi; "*Vasantotsav*", 1905, Reprint,1951; published by Nanalal
  2. Naik A Vihaang (2012) "*Poetry Manifesto*". New Delhi: Indialog Publications Pvt Ltd.
  3. Patel, Kanji. (2012), '*Dharti na Vachan*" published by the poet
  4. Tilak Waman Narayan, 1962, '*Vanwasi Phool',* edited Devadutt Narayan Tilak, Nagvidarbha Prakashan, pp 118
  5. Thomre, Trayambak Bapuji, (1968), "*Samagra Balkavi*", ed.Nanda Apte, Popular Prakashan
  6. Chitre, Dilip (eds & trs). 1967, "*Anthology of Marathi Poetry*". Mumbai/ Nirmala-Sadanand, pg. 9-10
  7. Kumaran, Ashan. 1972. "*Veena Poovu*". Sahitya Akademi Rabindra Bhavan,
  8. Kurup, O N V, 1984, "*Bhoomikoru Charamgeetam*" translated by the poet
  9. Sugathakumari (1988). *Kurinjipookal* (in Malayalam). DC Books

- Secondary Sources: The reviews, articles, interviews, works of all the nine poets published in various journals, magazines and books.

1.5: Scope of Research

- Study the interconnections between nature and culture , specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature
- Study the interconnections between literature and the entire 'ecosphere'
- Eco-critical reading of poetry of the nature poets of the Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam literature
- There is further scope of creating an awareness in modern poets towards raising their voice in favour of environmental issues and the role of man in saving mother nature

1.6: The Limitations of the Research

The present research study has some limitations.

2) It deals only with poems of the Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam literature.

3) It mainly focuses on ecological concerns and the changes found in the environment due to human actions.

4) The study is limited to the selected poems from the regional Indian literature.

5) The study will take only one theme in to consideration i.e. environmental degradation as reflected in the some of the related poems.

2. Review of the Related Research Literature

Literature is the reflection of life and this life entirely depends on nature. Without nature there is no life, without life there is no literature. So literature and nature are interrelated. This consciousness of the writers has brought the two disciplines of ecology and literary criticism together. The purpose is to restore the Earth's health, which was lost owing to man's wrongdoing. The study of deep ecology emphasizes the role of an individual who is invited to behave as a citizen of the World and Earth and to take the responsibility for it. The study of literature and environment consciousness is an interdisciplinary study termed as Eco-criticism.

The present study has been carried out with the main objective of exploring how far an ecocritical outlook sheds light on the selected poems of the poets mentioned earlier. Over the last three decades, ecocriticism has attracted many academicians. The connection between people and the landscape is a major issue of ecocriticism. The most theoretical criteria for critical analysis are early literary theories that concentrate on issues of class, ethnicity, gender, region. A further threat to the ecosphere, an ecological crisis has emerged in the late 20th century. Ecocriticism is the outcome of this new understanding that soon, unless we are vigilant, no beautiful objects in nature will be around for a literary discourse.

Ecocritical Theory is non-linear in Nature. Different ecocritical strands multiply into many sub-categories for eco-conscious based research. In eco-critical terminology, the definition of the universe relates with the ecosphere. Though ecocritical texts talk about nature, all works of nature writing are not ecocritical. The existence of a link between human and non-human established the ecocritical framework of a text in general. Ecocriticism promotes a deeper understanding of nature, interpreting and reflecting the natural world. It aims to preserve nature 's environmental rights. This study tries, by incorporating an ecological element, to provide a more comprehensive view of the selected poems through the green lens of ecocriticism.

The main objective of this research project is to attempt an ecocritical analysis of select poems in regional Indian Literature, especially Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam. The poets under consideration are Nanalal Dalpatram Kavi, Vihaang Naik and Kanji Patel in Gujarati language; Rev. Narayan Waman Tilak, Balkavi Thomre and Dilip Chitre from Marathi literature and ONV Kurup, Kumaran Asan and Sugatha Kumari from Malayalam Literature.

EMERGENCE OF ECOCRITICISM

Eco-criticism thus emerges as a result of celebration of nature in literary texts with a direct vision of nature longing. However, being developed as an academic discipline, eco-criticism deals with a study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyze the environment and brainstorm possible solution for the corrections of the contemporary environmental crises. The word ‘Eco’ and ‘Critic’ are derived from Greek words ‘Oikos’ and ‘Logos.’ The term “Eco-criticism” was coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism.” Eco-criticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works, both published in 1996, “The Eco-criticism Readers” edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm and “The Environmental Imagination” by Lawrence Buell. Glotfelty’s working definition in “The Eco-criticism Reader” is that “Eco-criticism is the study of relationship between literature and the physical environment.”(Glotfelty & Fromm:1998).

For ecocritics the nineteenth century developments in literature is significant. American and British Romantic writers took a particular interest in nature as a subject. Henry David Thoreau's

Walden (1854) and Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Nature* (1836) are the defining works in the field of ecocriticism. Nature and literature have always shared a close relationship as is

evidenced in the works of poets and other writers down the ages in almost all cultures of the

world. Today the intimate relationship between the natural and social world is being analyzed and emphasized in all departments of knowledge and development. The literary critic tries to study how this closer relationship between nature and society has been put into words by the writers in their works. Ecocriticism continues to grow as a discipline due to continued global environmental crises. Its major aim is to show how the work of writers concerned about the environment can play a part some part in solving real and pressing ecological concerns.
The need to examine the interfaces between nature and culture, animal and human, is urgent and never more pertinent than it is today. Pre ecological form of literary theory asks questions like "How does Literature function within the ecosystem?" or "How does a given textual representation of nature affect the way we treat ethical nature". The assumptions underlying ecological literary theory is that, "Everything is connected to everything else". Literature plays a part in an immensely complex global system in which energy, matter and ideas interact in a perpetual dance. Literature acts on people and people act on the world. Ecocritics wonder how literature may bring about healthful actions, and what role literary criticism may play in the process. This dissertation attempts to find out the eco consciousness in poetry of regional Indian literature; from the Romantic era to the Post-Modern, and trace the similarities and differences in their concepts of nature, environment and space and also their conservationist attitude towards nature.

ECO-POETICS

The British Romantic poets, under the leadership of William Wordsworth, celebrated beauty and mystery of nature. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) is the greatest poet of the Romantic age and a worshiper of nature. Wordsworth, in some of his most famous lyrics like "Michael" (1800), "The Prelude" (1850) and "The Excursion"(1814), has shown his philosophical reflection on the relationship of humanity and nature. The poets of the Romantic era like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Lord Byron and P B Shelley also included emotional descriptions of the natural world and the features of the best-known nature verse in English. The Romantic interest in nature is particularly significant to eco-critics because these poets are revolutionary in their politics, and the preservation of the natural world was one element of their radical thinking. Nineteenth century English writers such as Thomas Hardy, in his novels and Mathew Arnold in his poems, have splendidly described the 'places' and the Victorian writers like John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle wrote about nature and lamented the destruction of the environment due to industrialization. Wordsworth and other contemporary nature poets, concede that man has lost his greatest gifts, his ability to respond to nature and to be moved by its simple beauty or awesome power. The poet manifests the necessity of love, humanity and mutuality which sustain the evolving and growing of being bound by the

law of nature. The poet expresses humanity's need for the natural world and argues for being tolerant enough towards nature and its process to attain something in life. Wordsworth, through his poetry, has professed to end oppression and set up a progressive human society and harmonious human-nature relationship. The poet also urges that humans must practice the discipline of love and equal rights to existence and cultivate a sense of place. His persona conceived the Lake District as a sacred place that humans should respect.

The poems of the Romantic era and those of regional Indian poets have presented new perspective of environment, are a great reservoir for research activity. Ample research has been done by the research scholars and ample is to be done. A number of papers on the writing of these poets in national and international seminars and conferences show that the writing of these poets furnish opulent opportunities and possibilities of doing research on many hidden issues and aspects in their writings.

In this research paper, the writer analyzes the emergence of 'Green Criticism' or Eco-criticism. Its roots go back to the late 1970s, and it began developing in 1990s. It is also referred to as, "green studies", and "environmental literary criticism". The term "Eco-criticism" was coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism". Rueckert's purpose was to focus on the application of ecology to the study of literature.

The writer discusses in detail the issues related to eco-consciousness in the society by giving reference of the poems of Nanalal Dalpatram Kavi, Vihaang Naik and Kanji Patel in Gujarati language; Rev. Narayan Waman Tilak, Balkavi Thomre and Dilip Chitre from Marathi literature and ONV Kurup, Kumaran Asan and Sugatha Kumari from Malayalam Literature. Wordsworth's poetry is the best example of nature writing from the viewpoint of the eco-criticism. The writer deals with many issues related to the environment for example: The major theme in Wordsworth's poetry as portrayed by Jonathan Bate in his *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*, is that man has lost touch with nature. Hence, Wordsworth was against the Industrial Revolution, because of its destruction of the natural environment. Wordsworth thinks that this modern material world is full of violence and misery. These feelings are echoed by poets like Vihaang Naik, Kanji Patel, Dilip Chitre, ONV Kurup, and Sugathakumari. The writer discusses the vital relationship between humans and nature as discussed in the ancient Vedic literature. In fact, it wouldn't be wrong to assume that the ancient sages were some of the first Romantic poets of literature. However, the relationship between the romantic poets and nature remains a complex and compelling theme for anyone trying to unravel its complexity.

The writer elucidates the ecocritical views, of these poets, on nature and their individual

styles of writing. The work of these poets provide an opportunity to study and interpret the psychological being of the poets and find similarities and contrasts in them. Nanalal, Rev. Tilak, Balkavi, Sugathakumari and Kumaran Asan's view of nature that it is gentle and nurtures like a mother as showcased in their poems, provide an impetus and kindle positive thinking and a love for nature in their readers. their work exudes simple realism and empathy. They beseech man to take care of the environment otherwise be prepared to perish. ONV Kurup, Dilip Chitre, Vihaang Naik, and Kanji Patel, on the other hand fantastic reality and language in their portrayal of nature and thus create a vivid and sometimes scary image in the minds of the readers who are made to sit up and notice the perils of destroying the environment and face the consequences The thesis attempts to analyze the changing views of nature as depicted by the these poets. The writer also attempts to showcase how the poets under study try to persuade their readers to stand up and take notice of environmental degradation and work towards repairing the damage done by man. It is indeed a matter of "Preserve or Perish".

1.7: Research Methodology

With a view to provide an objective empirical support to the present research both primary and secondary sources will be used with authentic information from the internet to read, analyze and interpret the data critically for this research work. With the help of descriptive, analytical, comparative and interpretive methods of research, an attempt will be made to find out ways in which the chosen poets have presented their views on Nature by collecting data from their selected works. An attempt will be made to collect and study in order to explore the mentioned objectives. These methods would be employed as per the issues taken for deliberation and reference. Thus library research methodology and analytical research methodology will be the most suitable approach for the proposed study. The proposed research work is divided into six chapters for thorough analysis as mentioned below:

1.8: Proposed Chapterization

Chapter I: The first chapter ***Emergence of Eco-Consciousness – An Awakening*** is an attempt to give a detailed introduction to the theory of eco-criticism, from its origin to the present. It also examines how eco-criticism differs from other critical approaches, Romanticism in eco-criticsm, environmentalism and also the relatively new concept of eco-aestheticism. The relationship between nature and culture, gradual growth of eco-criticism and its related concepts of Deep Ecology, Eco-feminism, ecocide, ecosphere etc., are also described in this chapter.

Chapter II: The second chapter ***Environmental Consciousness In Indian Literature*** describes the development of Indian Literature through the Ages beginning with that of the Vedic period

down to the present. The chapter includes a summary of ancient Sanskrit literature, early Dravidian literature, Medieval Literature, which includes the compositions during the Bhakti movement and the Renaissance period of the nineteenth century. The origin of eco-criticism in Indian literature is traced to Nirmal Selvamony with the analysis of Tamil Sanghom literature by the name of Oikopoetics. The systematic work undertaken by OSLE - Organisation for the Study of Literature and Environment India, gave a sudden impetus to eco-critical studies. Indian eco-criticism is as old as the Vedic literature. The Vedic sages, from the ancient times have been instructing and guiding the people about preservation and conservation of the earth's resources. Complete annihilation and rehabilitation of the Universe, are the messages passed down through the ages, by the Srimad Bhagawatam and the Bhagawad Gita. A critical analysis of Indian English writing is included in the chapter, with special emphasis on the poetry of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu and A. K. Ramanujan.

Chapter III: The third chapter ***Preserve My Mother For My Children*** focuses on an ecocritical analysis of select poems from Gujarati literature. A brief study about Romanticism in '*Vasantotsav*' by Kavi Nanalal Dalpatram , Eco-sophy and Eco-feminism in Vihaang Naik's '*The Banyan City'* and the ecocidal overtones in a very short poem by Kanji Patel, '*Pagdandi*' have been taken up for discussion. Ecocide discusses the ecological destruction caused by actions of mankind, to nature and their own brethren, alike The central message through these poems is the poet's concern about the ill-effects of urbanization, the imminent environmental crisis and the need for humans to live in harmony with nature as they are mutually dependent on each other for their existence on the planet.

Chapter IV: The fourth chapter, ***My House – A Tree less Hill?*** is an attempt to analyse the chosen poems from Marathi literature. '*Ranat Ekthe Padlele Phool' by Rev. Tilak and Balkavi Thomre's 'Audumber'* are replete with the romantic spirit of finding beauty in objects of Nature. While Rev. Tilak finds spirituality in Nature, he also sends out the message of preservation of its resources by 'not plucking flowers' to adorn someone's hair. Thomre is a poet of five senses who finds solace in the lap of nature, a relief from the trials and tribulations of life. Dilip Chitre's poem '*The Felling of the Banyan Tree'*, discussed here, focuses on the parallel destruction of nature and women in a patriarchal society. While the women characters are able to associate themselves with nature, the male characters are insensitive to both women and nature. So nature and women are considered inferior by men. Both undergo parallel suffering in the hands of man. The poem represents the ecofeminist dimensions of masculine violence against women and nature at various levels.

Chapter V: The fifth chapter ***The Protection of Nature, for the Sustenance of Life*** is an attempt to focus on an ecocritical analysis of select green poems from Malayalam literature. The poems under study are '*The Fallen Flower'* by Kumaran Asan, ONV Kurup's '*A Requiem'* and Sugatha Kumari's "*Kurinhi Flowers'*. The poems '*Kurinhi Flowers*' and '*A Requiem'* send a powerful central message of environmental degradation or destruction brought about by the Silent Valley Hydroelectric project in Kerala. '*The Fallen Flower'* is a symbolic poem which shows the different aspects of life and the meaning of life in philosophy, thus the poem is viewed through an eco-sophical perspective. ' *A Requiem'* is apocalyptic in nature, it may be Malayalam's first work in connection with the imminent environmental catastrophe and the inhumanity of devastating wars. The beauty of the treatment makes it one of the best works on the devastation of wars. The Anti-War, Anti-nuclear movement, inseparable from the climate, had one more ally, in the poet. In '*Kuruinhi Pookal'*, Sugathakumari's nostalgia is a lost literary heritage and a loss of the nature,

Chapter VI: The sixth chapter, ***Global to Local….Glocal*** , attempts to arrive at a conclusion after eco-critically studying the above mentioned poems. For centuries, the Orient has been aping the Occident in a truly simian fashion. Now is the time to reverse the trend and come back to our roots, the Vedic culture. The Isa Upanisad says that **'I*savasyam idam sarvam yat kim ca jagatyam jagat, tena tyaktena bhunjitha, ma gridhah kasyasvid dhanam* (Isa 1)** . Everthing in the cosmos belongs to the Supreme Lord. One should take only that much wahat he needs and leave the rest for others. So it is time to come back from opulence to sustainable living, follow the principle of "Simple Living and High Thinking' as mentioned in the scriptures, if we want to leave our planet a better Home, for the future generations.

3: Current Significance of the Topic of Research:

- The present exploration of fiction with the theme of environmental degradation would be widely essential to comprehend the causes of global warming, climate change or change of seasons and the current pandemic.
- The theme has created interest among writers to lend their voice against human activities like urbanization, greed for more comfort etc., prevalent in society, in their works.
- The chosen poetry is a message from the poets, to encourage equality and harmony between nature and human beings.
- By reading such works, the general public has become environmentally conscious. There is an awakening of their eco-conscience.

- Thus, they have decided to mend their activities to reduce their carbon footprint, control pollution and try to save the environment. There will be a general tendency to change the greed of man to his need.
- Instead of aping the Occidental, people will come back to the Oriental culture and learn about sustainable living from the Vedic scriptures. Hopefully, 'Simple Living and High Thinking' will be adopted by a chosen few. This will be a first step towards saving the earth.

4. List of Research Papers Published & Conferences (presented)

	Citation for Reading	UGC Approved & Peer reviewed
1	• www.ijells.com • Maniar, Rashmi and Dr. Priya Raghav, "An Eco-conscious Awakening – A Socio-Eco-critical Elucidation of Select Indian Poets", INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH: LITERATURE, LANGUAGE & SKILLS Volume 9 Issue 2, July 2020 ISSN 2278-0742	Yes
2	• www.ijells.com • Maniar, Rashmi and Dr. Priya Raghav , "Nanalal, Poet Laureate Of Gujarat – A Messenger Of Spring, 'Vasantotsav' – A Case Study", INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH: LITERATURE, LANGUAGE & SKILLS, Volume 7 Issue 4, January 2019 ISSN 2278-0742	Yes
3	Maniar, Rashmi and Dr. Priya Raghav. "International Conference of Language Science & Management (IRLSM); at D.A.V. Centenary College – Faridabad; "An Eco-Theopoetical Reading Of Ancient Indian Literature". National Conference, 2019	Yes
4	Maniar, Rashmi. "A. K. Ramanujan – A poet of the Diaspora and an Eco-critic", Diaspora Women and The Marginalized: Literary Perspectives Hardcover – 1 January 2018 by Dr. Bijender Singh Edited By:Prof.Dr. Omana Antony (Author) Published by the **Pacific Book International.**	Yes
5	Maniar, Rashmi. "Using Poems In The ESL Classroom", paper presentation - International Conference On "English Language, Literature & Communication: Innovations & Applications in the Teaching – Learning Scenario" (ELLCIATLS-2017) at K.R.Mangalam University, Gurgaon • Received the Best Paper Presentation Certificate	Yes
6	Maniar, Rashmi. "Yesterday! Today!" (poems)(Vol.3, Issue.2) of GNOSIS: An International Referred Journal of English Language and Literature (ISSN: 2394-0131), Impact Factor: 4.147, December 2017 Issue	Yes
7	• Maniar, Rashmi. "Eco-consciousness in Vedic Literature "; Lingaya's International Referred Journal of English Language and Literature (LIRJELL), Dept. Of English; Vol. 3-Issue: 1-January-February 2016, General	yes

	Theme(ISSN:2348-1617) • International Conference - Making Connections: Social Welfare in the Context of English Language & Literature-A Global Perspective (MCSWELL 2016)- Paper Presentation	
8	Maniar, Rashmi. "Spirituality in the Poems of William Wordsworth" – Paper presentation at International Conference - English Language and Literature : A Tool for Humanising (ELLATH-2015) at Lingaya's Vidyapeeth	yes

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- http://www.palgrave.com.

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%age	: 55%
Title of the Thesis	: *PRESERVE OR PERISH* An Eco-critical Reading of Select Green poems in Gujarati, Marathi and Malayalam Literature

Place:

Date:

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